The
COMMONWEAL

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THE WEEK 587
NEW MELTING POT? *J. L. Benvenisti* 590
EMPIRE IN CRISIS *Luigi Sturzo* 593
RECENT CONVERSIONS *Dorothy Thompson* 597
COMMUNICATIONS 598
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 598
THE LABOR MOVEMENT *John C. Cort* 600
BOOKS OF THE WEEK 602

Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man—God and the Atom—David the King—The Story of Woodrow Wilson—The Growth of Constitutional Power—According to the Pattern

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The General and the Bomb

LIKE A child dragging a toy train on a string along the sidewalk—the child looks back and the train has overturned—the General in peace time parades his tanks over the fields and the ditches, his planes in the sky; he sends his men climbing stone walls, rope ladders, crawling through barrels; he marches the blue regiment to the placed marked *x* on the map from which the red regiment has strategically departed; he is not discontented. Left to himself, the General does not start a war because a real war inevitably can only be one war, not a dozen; it puts a limit to the infinite variety of the innumerable wars, the unlimited strategies, the million possible chess moves, that furnish true delight to the General's mind. Dispassionately the General constructs a defense, prepares attack against all nations great and small, against all mathematically possible combinations of nations, moving Castles and Knights across the terrain of his mind—and the pawns which are the infantry. Long an intimate of Mars, he now has radared the Moon; also he possesses now that energy which burns as brightly as the Sun.

This possibility of pushing the face of mankind right into the Sun, he now desires to keep for himself. He wants to keep the secret. He is no apprentice sorcerer; he has had long experience as guardian of the bow and arrow, the arbalest, gunpowder, cannon balls and more recent instruments of war. He can be trusted. It is only when the civilian within him is aroused, or when the civilians outside him report the sinking of some Maine, or believe that they have a mission, that he is compelled to choose one of his million plans and let it loose.

What we have written about the General is in a way the official view held by the military. We have used their words and have some degree of sympathy for the thesis they have recently been expounding in their attempt to keep the atomic bomb from falling—they fear it would explode—into the hands of the careless public. Yet if we rely exclusively on the military to save us from the atomic bomb it is as if we relied for eternal salvation exclusively on those other professionals, the monks in their monasteries praying for our souls.

It may seem convenient to let the monks and the military fill the void left by our failing will, our inoperative love; it is not honest, and if that painful word responsibility comes into our consciousness out of some dream it becomes immediately apparent that it is not honest.

From the start—but we will make sure that it does not go on to the finish—in all that concerns the atomic bomb, the American people have not even been given the chance to be honest or to assume their responsibilities. A bomb fell on Hiroshima; another and better bomb fell on Nagasaki; the bombs fell because they were dropped—from planes—and the American people stared at this performance like unintelligent Newtons watching the apple. Without saying yes or saying no—because no one asked us our permission—we saw the nation's honor fall.

That was an act of the military; and they will say that they were finishing a war and not starting one; they will say that they were doing precisely what the Germans did when they flew their planes over the Spanish Civil War; there was a convenient war and they needed to try out a new invention—two variants of a new invention.

What the Germans did in Spain failed to persuade us at the time; what we did to the Japanese—and by extension to all humanity—disgusted us at the time, but it is unnecessary now to move about in the closed world of war morality. We are at peace. We desire to remain at peace.

Therefore, how many atomic bombs have we on hand? How many more have been prepared this month? What is the production schedule for next month? How long are we going to continue making these bombs? We are probing into military secrets. We will get no answers. But this time there is a reply we can make to the silence of the Generals. We can place atomic energy under civilian control, and let the Generals do the asking.

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The Famine Spectre

TOO much evidence is at hand to permit anyone to dismiss as alarmism the threat of starvation for a half billion of the world's people. The war comes first as the underlying cause. But the more immediate reason—and the material factor which somewhat explains why authorities in many countries are so ill prepared to meet the crisis—is the drought which cut Europe's harvest by 20,000,000 tons of precious wheat and rye. And famine stalks in the land in many cases where peoples are already greatly weakened by harsh years of suffering and privation. The proposal to cut the basic food ration in occupied Germany and Japan to 1,000 calories is an index of the gravity of the emergency. The United States is able to do more about it than any of the other food exporting countries.

Two things are called for. The first, and most pressing, is to provide enough foodstuffs to tide over stricken nations until the first harvest four months hence. The second is somewhat more long-range. It has to do with building up sufficient food stocks to see these threatened peoples through next winter. Mr. Hoover (now off to view the European food situation at first hand), Mr. Lehman and other leaders conversant with the facts could hardly be more gloomy—especially about the first and more immediate problem. Things are apparently so out of hand that the task is to see how many lives the food exporting nations will be able to save.

At such a juncture President Truman has announced a 39-point voluntary food-saving program addressed to restaurants, bakeries, food processors and distributors and the consuming public. The President's statement was couched in the most compelling terms and his program could hardly be more specific. The OPA cooperated by allowing bakers to charge as much as ever for a loaf of bread 10 percent lighter in weight. Mr. Hoover appealed to the American people to welcome "an invisible guest" to every meal, denying themselves the food which could be sent to the starving. Others spoke in similar terms on the radio or made supporting statements to the press. But little happened.

Many restaurants continue to bring bread and rolls to their clients by the basketful. Cake and pie are plentiful. The American home has soon forgotten the agonizing news items about the men, women and children of distant lands. The country has not changed its eating habits. Even the Lenten season has not been nearly as effectual as it might have been this spring in persuading Americans to cut down their consumption of vital foodstuffs to save lives.

Are we, then, a heartless people? No. We have been exposed to atrocities and other horrors for so many months on end, now, that our sense of lively human sympathy is badly blunted, but we are still a generous people. It is simply that we do not realize the true nature of the situation in our hearts.

The American people were poorly prepared, if at all, for the President's pronouncement. There has been little or nothing to follow it up. The 39-point program and the invisible guest are already on the way to being full forgotten. It was not sufficiently explained how the individual sacrifice of so many rolls or slices of bread a day would directly result in the delivery of an equivalent number of breadstuffs to someone threatened with starvation. It was not dramatized that the fats delivered to the butcher or their equivalent would actually thereby reach abroad or that the food consumed instead of being consigned to the family garbage pail would have any appreciative effect. The program was announced with one big splash and then public attention turned to other things. Little or nothing was done to implement the program or even keep it before the public mind.

In a crisis of such moment and proportions there are two possible solutions: the compulsory and the voluntary. Since it seems to have come upon the world so suddenly (and it is hard to say why the famine danger could not have been thoroughly foreseen) the former method would seem to be the preferable. New rationing would present a number of major practical difficulties; yet with what is at stake they could have been surmounted. They can still be overcome. If the United States, however, confines herself to voluntary methods of saving vital foodstuffs for people overseas, she must bring into play the vast educational resources which are at her command. Consider, for instance, the well-integrated propaganda of screen and press and radio which launched and maintained each successive war loan drive. That is the sort of thing demanded now if food saving on a voluntary basis is to prove effective on a large scale in saving lives. Our Government's duty is hardly fulfilled by even the most eloquent single statement "for the record."

Musk Ox and Iceberg

ONE ITEM of current war news which is less gloomy reading than most is the publicity beginning to appear about the Canadian Operation Musk Ox and the US Navy's Operation Iceberg. These are the experimental expeditions now penetrating the American Far North, the Canadians on various types of arctic land vehicles, and the Americans aboard the Aircraft Carrier Midway and a few destroyers.

It is the non-military part of the story which provides relief. Perhaps it is not properly "re-

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lief," but rather "escape." Determining which, indeed, is a practical problem which might be looked into.

The Arctic is without doubt a frontier. That is a fact, and from it there arise romantic and nostalgic feelings, and long, long thoughts. Frontier is a great word in American history and literature, and the American frontier was a great word for millions throughout Europe as well. Is the Arctic frontier the gateway to a new area of civilized settlement, or is it simply a short cut to more efficient world-wide wars and a cool place for starving to death?

Is it a fact, or is it not a fact that there are many million people in many parts of the world who have practically no property where they are now, and no useful occupation, no prospects, and only the faintest desire to stay put? Certain pages of the paper certainly make this seem a fact—many European areas and many regions of the Orient, and doubtless some places in America.

These questions could be combined. Canada, US, Russia and others have had accelerated experience with the Far North during the war. Now there are these military and naval training and testing expeditions being carried out in the most scientific manner possible. It is time really to work on the newly accumulated evidence of living in the Arctic. Civilian as well as military people should have the opportunity to learn from Musk Ox and Iceberg and from other military exercises in the North.

There are some possibilities for settlement in Alaska and Northern Canada. For a while during the war, there was great publicity about the new frontier of the North, and Alaskan development was made to sound just around the first corner after the conclusion of hostilities. Now the American Government seems to be blowing cold, sedulously dampening enthusiasms that might remain about pioneering in Alaska. The arguments, however, have never been clearly or fully publicized. They should be.

The problem of population per square mile is a bewildering one. There is no scientific standard to measure what is the best number of persons to have living in a given area, nor any certain way to tell when a region has too little or too much density of population for the highest social development. Over the past decades, however, for one reason and another, there has been too much about over-population. Germany, Italy, Japan, Puerto Rico, India, China have all more or less carelessly been proclaimed by themselves or by outsiders as areas of over-population. Among Americans, England itself has been thought to be rather uncomfortably densely peopled. Mr. Benvenisti's article showing that England may now be in the market for immigrants is something new. It is a decidedly hopeful conception.

Whatever the true situation about density of population may be around the world, when all the indirect and subtle factors are weighed, it will in any event be true that the world would be far happier and healthier if there were more countries and areas bidding for persons to come and settle down and if there were less talk and pressure to make more and more people dispossessed and displaced. If the American North can enter the market for people, it will help America and it will bid up the value of people everywhere.

Running Through Chicago

AGITATION by some of the local eastern railways, we see, has resulted in through-car service from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific. This may make the eastern systems (Wasn't the Chesapeake & Ohio the leader, or some outfit like that?) feel like real big transcontinental lines, and may save a few dude passengers a little interesting effort with luggage and Parmalee Transfers in Chicago, but all in all, it looks to us like a step leading down.

It is, of course, an insult to Chicago, and a reaction is to be expected. That, in the first place, is ominous. The whole thing is based on a misconception of what the Middle West and even more what the West is. Those areas simply are not extensions of New York Central or Pennsylvania (Chesapeake & Ohio!) territory. It is wrong to indulge the provincialisms of Easterners. Easterners ought to have a jolt, a little labor, at least a brief interval of orientating discovery on their feet when they get as far from home as Chicago. Then, the railroads west of Chicago are different affairs than all those interurbans running East. They have a different and richer position in the culture out there.

The picture of a sleeper that may run between Boston and New York being hitched on a western express traveling the long lines of single track straight at the setting sun through the sage brush and up into the Rockies is too inappropriate for even this revolutionary world. How will the brakemen feel walking through those strange corridors? Children on the prairies and in the desert and up in the mountains, placidly watching the trains go by, will feel bewildered and betrayed. What will happen to an eastern Pullman (but then there are to be no more real Pullmans) when it gets on a western road that uses the left hand when it has two tracks? The transition for eastern passengers will be very shaking when they leave their local sleepers and find themselves in real western dining cars, eating baked potatoes and steaks like the advertisements say, or drinking Old Crow in the observation car. If there must be things like this, the railways should run a sealed train from Manhattan to L.A.—non-stop.

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New Melting Pot?

Suggestions for a British Ellis Island

J. L. Benvenisti

ANY LOVER of Britain must at the moment be asking himself some very searching questions. It is obvious that profound changes have taken place in Britain's general circumstances. Will she have the vigor and flexibility to adapt herself to them? Will she despite everything continue to play a great and honorable part in world affairs?

First a word as to the nature of these changes. The most important single factor in producing them is the loss of our overseas investments. Before the war we received vast quantities of goods without giving any return for them at all. They came to us without effort on our part as the result of our accumulated wealth of the past.

These accumulations have now passed into your hands. You took them as payment for the services you rendered us before the days of Lend-Lease. I say this entirely without recriminatory intention, I merely state a fact. And now we are in the position that must confront anyone who has lost an unearned income—we must work much harder than before.

Actually, however, as I have pointed out in a previous article, it is at least doubtful whether, assuming that we are to maintain a tolerable standard of life, we have a sufficiency of manpower to accomplish all that will be necessary. Indeed, as far as the future can be foretold at all, we are likely to suffer from an acute labor shortage over a long period of time.

The presence of a not inconsiderable amount of frictional unemployment is temporarily obscuring this fact. We have at the moment some 300,000 men on our unemployment register which would be equivalent to something over a million with you, and there is in addition much concealed unemployment of one kind or another; for we are short of tools and materials, and as long as this is the case production cannot get started. But this phase will pass, and the real symptoms of our malady will make themselves felt before we are very much older.

This malady is going to have one very important consequence. It is bound to cause an acute crisis in our emigration policy and thus seriously affect our relations with our Dominions.

Let us take the very typical example of Australia. Australia has at the moment a population of 7 millions; but if the war has proved anything at all, it has proved that Australia's position is precarious to the point of being impossible. Here is this huge tract of fertile territory, connected to hungry and over-populated Asia by a series of relatively easy stepping-stones. If it is to be held at all by men of the white race, it must be populated, and that very speedily—and no one knows that better than the Australians themselves, who will soon once more be looking to Britain, their traditional blood donor, for fresh infusions.

Australia would certainly prefer her immigrants to be British; but whether she draws her human increment from Britain or another, it is her declared aim to raise her population to 20 millions, and considering the circumstances of the case that is a very modest ambition. In 1885 the Prime Minister of Victoria maintained that in the next half-century Australia would have a population of some 50 millions. That prediction has not come true, and, as has been shown, the modern Australian is thinking in much smaller quantities. But this reduced target of 20 millions Australia is determined to attain.

It is the declared policy of the Commonwealth, as soon as her fighting men have been re-settled, to admit seventy thousand assisted immigrants a year. To these must be added the natural increase of births over deaths, which at the moment is about eighty thousand, and the inflow of such unassisted immigrants as arrive at her shores. But the crucial matter is the 70,000 assisted immigrants.

An obvious and vital question now arises for Britain. Can she supply the quota of seventy thousand a year, or even a substantial part of it, or must she abdicate her position and gradually allow the very strong ties of blood and sentiment which bind her to the Dominion to wither away?

If she follows traditional policies, it is most unlikely that she can hope for much. Some six hundred thousand men and women are at the moment attaining working age in every year, and will continue to do so until some change in the trend of the birthrate, either upwards or downwards, begins to affect the figure, which obviously cannot be for another fifteen to twenty years. If Australia were to depend wholly on ourselves as

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we are today it would mean that we should ultimately be deprived of one worker in every eight.

Thirty years ago, with well over a million live births a year, and our population still expanding, the thing was easy. Indeed, we were heartily glad of the outlet. Today it is a different matter, and although statesmen try to minimize the matter and obscure it with rhetoric, they cannot pontificate the problem out of existence. "No merely theoretical calculations as to the future consequences of such movements," said a Minister on a fairly recent occasion, "ought to stand in the way of the migration of individuals."* But if the most vigorous and most virile elements of our people are drained away and leave us with nothing but a birthrate that, despite occasional spurts, is distinctly wobbly, and a growing army of old age pensioners, then it is no good talking of theoretical caculations. We shall be confronted by a very damnable piece of fact.

One ingenious politician, Mr. Emrys Williams, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, attempted some time ago to argue that "the very fact that opportunities are opening out in the Dominions might have its effect in averting a decrease in the population in this country." But this is a very hazardous guess. The birthrate, in so far as we understand the thing at all, depends on a complex variety of factors, spiritual as well as economic, and the fact that children might have the opportunity of assisted emigration to Australia in twenty years' time is hardly likely to persuade parents to bring any additional children into the world. In so far as purely material matters count in this matter, such things as housing and the ability to feed, clothe and educate the child decently are of far greater importance.

*

I fear we must look this thing in the face. If we are going to export manpower we must import at least a corresponding, even if not actually a greater amount, and this is most certainly what sooner or later we shall set ourselves to do.

Already we are employing Polish miners in our mines, and there are projects under consideration for increasing the numbers so employed. When General Anders's army in Italy is disbanded, we shall be glad of the services of every member of it who cares to settle here. We shall be glad of those services not necessarily in the mines but in every avocation to which the talents of the individuals concerned are suited.

No doubt in the course of time other stocks will come over here, and there is in my mind no doubt whatever that we shall ultimately have to accept large numbers of Germans and Austrians. The appalling catastrophe of the mass expulsion of Germans has not yet reached its climax, and the westward drift of millions upon millions of homeless men, women and children will shortly produce the most terrible unemployment problem the world has ever seen. The question whether Britain, apart from any consideration of humanity, may not serve her own interests by dipping into this huge and unhappy human reservoir, is too obvious to be missed.

However, Germans or no Germans, some kind of large scale absorption of foreign stocks seems to be inevitable. If Britain is still to count for something in the world, if the British Commonwealth is to be the great peaceful and civilizing force which it once promised to be, the Mother Country will have to take the place of America and turn herself into the "melting-pot" of the twentieth century.

Will she be able to accomplish this task? Frankly, I do not know, though I believe she will. It depends on whether we can create a catalytic agency by which the new unity can be formed. It depends, I think, largely upon whether we can evolve an idea as stirring and revolutionary as that which America evolved 150 years ago, and by successfully substituting the intellectual for the genetic principle in nation-making, once more create a great and vigorous new society.

I believe that we are groping towards such an idea, and it is in the light of that idea that much that is now going on in Britain must really be understood. In a recent article published in these pages I spoke of British Socialism being the logical outcome of our slow impoverishment. A poor society cannot dispense with certain economies of socialization of which a rich society does not feel the need. I think I was right to point that out, but in pointing it out I also stressed the other element, which is the moral element, in British Socialism, and it is with that element which I am here more immediately concerned.

I am anxious to make this last point very clear, for I do not think that in all the history of international relations there has been such incredible misreading and misinterpretation as has taken place in America with regard to Britain's growing socialist predilections. From what I can gather the American critic sees in these nothing but a lunatic desire on the part of the British working man to get something for nothing, to live without working, to eat venison with a golden spoon, if I may quote the immortal Mr. Bounderby, and generally to have his cake and eat it. Confronted by this spectacle of moral and intellectual debauch, the said American critic ascribes our undoubted rejection of his own sturdy individualism to an insidious decay in the national nerve.

* The Duke of Devonshire in the House of Lords on the 22nd September, 1943.

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Should any reader of these lines be of that way of thinking, I would start by saying this to him. Although England was both begetter and nurse of laissez-faire individualism, there is no nation that has a more consistent tradition of revolt against it. Indeed, I do not know an example of any country in which you will find all the finer spirits so consistently arrayed against its ruling philosophy—Dickens, Carlyle, Morris, Ruskin and, by no means the least important, that genius who looks like again coming into his own, Benjamin Disraeli. And—here is my point—it was not a merely negative protest, it was a reaching out for a positive and purely spiritual thing.

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It is unfortunate, in so far as it militates against a clear understanding of the issue, that this protest was in part at least a protest against mere cruelty and intolerable conditions, things which existed over a particular and comparatively brief period of time, and which have now largely disappeared. But if you study it carefully, this sustained rebellion of the English all through the nineteenth century is seen to be only incidentally and superficially a rebellion against cruelty, which, after all, was not some new invention of the capitalist era. It was much more a rebellion against a false interpretation of human nature and was only secondarily concerned with economic affairs. It was primarily concerned with the relations which men should have with their fellow men if they are themselves to be spiritually healthy.

This present new rebellion of the English, against what some people seem to regard as the accepted decencies of Anglo-Saxon behavior, is quite in line with what has gone before. If you try to interpret it in economic and materialistic terms, if you see in it nothing more than an attempt to get more by giving less, you will wholly miss its meaning. It is fundamentally a religious upheaval, an attempt to express the ideal of human brotherhood, and derives from the instinctive knowledge that we cannot live happily and fruitfully unless that ideal is present to give purpose to our lives.

That is the real root of our quarrel with capitalism. We are not quarreling with the capitalist system because it pays bad wages (it is unlikely that any other system would pay better ones), but because it leaves us spiritually dissatisfied, and above all, I think, because it gives no outlet to the instinct of self-dedication which is as strong in man as the strongest of his physical appetites. For a man cannot dedicate himself to a job from which, as a mere matter of convenience, he is liable to be sacked at the end of the week.

This is why people are demanding a form of social organization in which their loyalty can exercise itself on something larger and more permanent than the individual firm. That is why they want a form of social organization in which this idea of human brotherhood finds intelligent expression. If they are given that, the world will be surprised to what lengths of self-sacrifice and self-denial they are prepared to go.

I write this not as a piece of rhetoric, but as the result of intimate, first-hand experience. During the war I gave over a thousand talks to the fighting forces, almost every one of which was followed by a lively discussion. Since the cessation of the fighting, I have continued this work among the building workers who are repairing the bomb damage in London. What I am telling you here has been, if you like, sifted and re-interpreted by myself, but fundamentally it is a reflection of what is in the minds of millions of ordinary men.

Now, I say that you have got something here that might really produce a new growth, because it truly touches the vital element in man, and that might have far-reaching consequences. I know I am on dangerous ground, for of all the phrases that demogogic claptrap has made odious, of all the phrases that the sloganeer and the political gangster have debased, there is none which has been turned to such disreputable account as the one about nations having a mission. Let me say this, however. It is at least conceivable that Britain may be working towards a solution not only of her own problem but that of a large part of Europe as well, and those who know the truth about contemporary Europe will admit that a solution is rather badly needed.

Cancelled Leave

Waiting and waiting with the room all ready,
I could not drag her from the telephone.
It was so dead quiet that I had to drown it out.
"Why there?" I said. "Think he's forgotten the way?"
The gate stayed empty but the wind came up.
Regular gale. Blasted all afternoon.
The old elm had to struggle for its life
Almost as hard as in the hurricane.

It was at night though that we really knew.
The railway yards' eternal undertone
Accompanying our lives, so close, so deep
We hardly hear it—well, we heard it then.
The idling bell, the flutter of steam, those old switch engines fussing
Or else that diesel thrust compact and sure
Crashing the empties, and the freights in motion
And the expresses crying from afar
Confusion on the hour, even the taxi horns
All sounded different
Like the long hauls that Jim was headed for,
Sounded as they had not for years
Like before I got married, when I was bumming around.

WARREN RAMSEY.

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Empire in Crisis

What the British face the four seas over

Luigi Sturzo

WINSTON CHURCHILL, in one of his spontaneous outbursts, once said that he had not become prime minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. He seems never to have realized that his own policy brought the empire to a crisis from which it can only be extricated with great difficulty. By "British Empire" I mean the entire complex of political, economic and territorial interests centered in London, including the Dominions, India, the colonies, sea passages and naval bases. The present crisis is felt wherever British power has extended itself.

Before the first world war British policy hinged on four cardinal points: a balance of power in Europe, free trade on a pound sterling basis, the safety of the British lifeline through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the supremacy of the British fleet in every ocean. With these things assured Britain was able to deal ably and successfully with any differences arising in its relations with France, Germany, Russia or the United States. Although this war ended with an allied victory and the acquisition by mandate of German colonies in Africa and new states in the Near East, it nevertheless shook the foundations of British power. The disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire caused the loss of a bastion between Russia and Central-East Europe which was never to be restored in equal strength. The Little Entente, a weak and unsteady coalition, looked toward France; Poland, first attracted in the same direction, later turned toward Germany, as did Austria and Hungary. Britain tried to maintain the balance of power on the Continent by favoring now Germany, now France or Italy. But Europe was suffering crisis after crisis, which caused Britain to lose money, prestige and influence. Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany made such a far-reaching impression on the ruling classes of both Britain and France.

Meanwhile Britain had to abandon free trade, setting new general tariffs with preferential system for the Dominions, abandoned the gold standard and made way for the American dollar, thus bringing about an important change in her economic system.

The lifeline through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea seemed at one time entirely safe. The Near East, including Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine and Iran, was under British dominion or influence; Egypt was kept quiet with concessions and India was held down with both promises and coercion. Then Turkey made claims which were settled at Montreux; the Italian Fascist government raised its head and Austen Chamberlain hastened to propose a tri-partite agreement in regard to Abyssinia (1925). This agreement did not go far enough and further concessions were made until finally Mussolini embarked on his East African adventure. Everyone knows the pitiful tale of the conduct of the League of Nations at this time: how the sanctions pronounced against Italy petered out into a *de jure* recognition of the Fascist conquest. The failure of British policy in the Mediterranean was equally clear during the Civil War in Spain, where Hitler and Mussolini, in the rôle of crusaders, tried out new arms and new strategy for a war which already appeared in the making. The Mediterranean was no longer a safe seaway for Britain and the Gentlemen's Agreement signed at Rome by Neville Chamberlain and Mussolini (1938) turned out to be only a scrap of paper.

Even the fourth and most important source of British power, the navy which had ruled and policed the seas for generations, was badly shaken after the first world war. The agreement reached at Washington in 1921 reflected clearly the rivalry of the United States and the growing power of Japan. Britain refused to subscribe to Wilson's doctrine of freedom of the seas, but except at Gibraltar and Suez other flags were flying and upstart powers aspired to rule the waves. This new state of affairs was made even clearer by the failure of the second naval conference held in London in 1930.

The end of the present war finds the British Empire in a state of far greater crisis. Western Europe has fallen apart and while no nation is left able to play Britain's game effectively Russia has risen to the rank of a first-class power and is in a position to provide far stronger opposition than did Germany in either 1914 or 1939. The pound sterling can no longer compete with the dollar and three-fourths or more of world business is centered in America. The British loan now under consideration in Washington indicates this

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clearly enough. As for the lifeline of the Empire, it is no longer challenged by Italy, to be sure, but Russia has set out to attain its old ambition of access to warm waters, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. At the same time the United States Navy, by virtue of the number of its ships and its new bases, has become the first in the world. In a few years a new and powerful Russian fleet will also be built.

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Now that its four principal supports are shaken, weakened or fallen apart, how can the British Empire stand? This is the great problem of today. Let us look at its various parts.

(1) The Dominions: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and (under a slightly different aspect) Eire. This group of powers, making up the Commonwealth, are bound together by a common language, tradition, sentiment and business interests, in such a way as to form neither a federation nor an empire, but a centripetal free union of independent states. This union will endure as long as economic reasons, the defense of common ideals and the strength of tradition hold it together. Since none of the Dominions is in itself a major power and none of them is drawn toward Russia, their only remaining choice is between continued ties with the British Isles or a shift of loyalty to the United States. Time will reveal the policy of the various Dominions, for each one has interests and problems of its own.

(2) India. It is next to impossible to foresee the fate of India. The most natural thing would be for it to become a new independent unit of the Commonwealth. But this is unlikely as long as the internal struggle between Hindus and Moslems remains unsettled. There are other problems, besides, because of the feudal principalities and the caste system. India today has a symbolical political personality, which is accepted at international gatherings, but its structural unity is so far maintained only through the presence of the British. Without this presence India might go through a phase of disorder and civil war such as prevails in China, leading to a division into federated zones. We cannot foresee that Britain will leave India to its own devices in the near future. But can it continue to bear the political and economic cost?

(3) The Colonies. Britain will keep the control of its colonies, even if it offers to turn them over to the UNO (while retaining its administrative power) as it did recently with the former German possessions in Africa held under mandate. This will be a good opportunity for ending the military limitations imposed by the old League of Nations, in view of the fact that the United States will not wish to see any limitation of its sovereignty over the Pacific islands which it will take over either by mandate or by simple annexation. It is true that the powers with a mandate must encourage the native populations to work toward independence, but it is unlikely that such a goal can be reached within a period of ten years, such as the United States suggested for Libya and Eritrea. The educational phase will have to be longer than this, not only because of political and psychological difficulties but also because every colonizing power will naturally wish to assure itself of the future friendship, collaboration of the native populations. It is not surprising that Britain should think of gradually transforming its colonies into dominions and members of the Commonwealth.

(5) Spheres of influence and strategic bases. The vast territorial complex of the British Empire requires for the maintenance of its access to the British Isles the network of spheres of influence and strategic bases which Britain has taken advantage of every opportunity to create for itself. Hence we see the Union Jack flying over portions of the Iberian peninsula, Malta, Egypt, the Near and Middle East, China, Oceania and even of America. During the second world war the United States increased the number of its naval bases at Britain's expense. Because of the common interest in winning the war London was less sensitive than it might have been to losses suffered by the Empire through recognizing a strong American interest in certain British zones. This was not universally the case, however. In the Arabian and Persian areas Britain did not allow the competition of other powers, even of France, in the Near East.

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The crisis of which we are speaking embraces the whole complex of British imperial interests, including the friendly relations with certain other countries which seem unlikely to be maintained in the present line-up of world powers. If the Empire is to survive this crisis it must rebuild its fences and strengthen the ties created by converging interests in order to offset the centrifugal forces which threaten to tear it apart. Only two nations have come out of the war stronger than the British Empire. One of these, the United States, is friendly in spite of differences of popular opinion and business interests. The other, Soviet Russia, is definitely an adversary, presently engaged in acquiring a place in Europe, Asia and Africa which is prejudicial to British security.

The United States is seeking to reconcile Britain and Russia but it has its own position to maintain in the Near East, China, Manchuria, Korea, Japan and the Pacific islands and everywhere it, too, sees the Russian shadow. Stalin has accused the capitalist countries of seeking to encircle the

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Soviet Union. A certain encirclement, of course, does exist and will continue to do so even if Stalin expands his borders from the Baltic to the North Sea, from China to the Kuriles, and from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. But it is a purely theoretical encirclement, whether we look at pre-war Russia or at the buffer area with which Russia is now surrounding itself. As a matter of facts Russia enjoys considering itself encircled; its complaints on this score serve to arouse sympathy within the countries of its supposed enemies. In reality there is no such encirclement. Russia has been able to carry out carefully laid and cleverly executed plans, making an open attack on Great Britain by its denunciation before the Security Council of British military intervention in Greece and Indonesia. This offensive (which is not limited to those two instances) is part of a policy to which Britain seems to have found no effective answer.

Meanwhile the United States stares at the growth of Russian might with open-mouthed astonishment, as if it were uncertain whether to give in or to fight back. On the one hand it seeks to safeguard its own intetests, on the other it fears to be too closely bound to the British position. It would like to stick to the ideas of spheres of influence, but it is aware that the world cannot be divided into closed compartments, one for every member of the Big Three.

The strange thing is that while Russia has kept the Americans and British (and everyone else, of course) out of its sphere, neither Britain nor the United States can keep Russia out of theirs. If Russia cannot penetrate them with its army, or take direct action, it still has recourse to the Communist Party members of every country who pave the way for Russian influence all over the world.

Just now the offensive is against Britain. Will Russia acquire Tripoli, Massaua, the Dodecanese Islands, Azerbaijan, a free passage through the Dardanelles and other points in the Near East? Will it succeed in having Trieste and Macedonia given to Yugoslavia and an outlet on the Greek coast to Bulgaria? Will it set up pro-communist governments in Greece, Italy, Spain and France? Will Iran and Turkey submit to Russian demands? Will Egypt, Iraq and the Transjordan come under Russian influence? We cannot yet answer these questions in relation to every zone now under dispute. This much we can, however, say. If Great Britain, because of an excess of compromise, tactical errors or the loss of confidence and backing from the Mediterranean countries, has to give in all along the line, then it will be the turn of the United States to resist Russia's encroaching demands. The present stage of things in regard to the establishment of peace treaties with Italy, the Balkan countries, Finland, Austria, Germany and Japan marks the most critical point for Britain and the United States alike. Even if they manage to save some of their interests, they have already added to the prestige and influence of their third partner. the Soviet Union.

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Those who have read this far may be of the opinion that I have attributed too little importance to the United Nations Organization and that I have spoken of the empires of the Big Three as if nothing else existed in all the world and such empires were inevitable. To tell the truth I do not see that the UNO has any importance of its own outside the orbit of the Big Three; it is an instrument of Anglo-American-Russian policy. Neither France nor China, the poor relations in the pentarchy, can have a strong international policy for some time to come, and they must fall in with one or more of the senior powers. South America, which could have a strong influence and may have one fifty years hence, has no important contribution to make. The great advantage of holding open discussions and giving world opinion an opportunity to express itself through the UNO Assembly is somewhat attenuated by the fact that in Russia and its satellites there is neither a free press nor a free radio and no one can even enter them without the consent of dictatorial governments. The Big Three make up the only strong forces which have come out of the war and they are shaping the post-war world. It appears unlikely, as things are today, that they will carry out in harmony any serious and constructive policy such as was hoped for by those rather credulous souls who believed in a permanent friendship among the three leaders who met at Teheran: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin (the order is alphabetical).

As long as no peace treaties are drawn up (and this is not the UNO's job) the world will be in a state of flux and only Russia will be able to take the initiative. The offensive carried on in the American press between August and October, 1945, with the threat of the atomic bomb was a failure because it was plainly a toy in the hands of a child. The Big Five meeting in London had to be stopped and the American and British leaders had to go to Canossa, I mean to Moscow, in order to get things going again.

Bevin's defensive methods may lead to a postponement of the peace treaties but they are not sufficient to stave off the dangers threatening the whole British orbit. If a defense is to be successful it must cover a new initiative designed to counter the move of the adversary which had made it necessary. Today the British no longer have the initiative, in spite of their efforts to consolidate the gains made during the war. Nor can

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we be sure that the United States will step into the British place even with its attempt to hold a balance between the two antagonists. The initiative is in Russian hands and Stalin knows how to use it by furnishing grounds for discussion in international assemblies and committees while he continues to bring pressure to bear and to take up new and advanced positions in the countries which Russia occupies and in the zones under dispute.

Some of my readers may not only lack interest in the fate of empires, but may go so far as to wish for their disappearance from the face of the earth. Others may be of the belief that an empire is by definition the creation of a monarchical, aristocratic or militaristic régime and hence, although they speak of the British Empire, they cannot conceive of a Russian or American Empire. Of course, if we are to judge by names alone, we find only a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and a United States of America, and neither of these agglomerations is ruled by a king or an emperor; their leaders are commissars of the people and freely elected presidents. Russia, indeed, claims to possess an "economic democracy" superior to western "political democracy."

But the real state of affairs is quite different. Russia and the United States *are* empires, by virtue of the vast areas which they cover and the size of their populations. Both must follow a policy of expansion for the sake of safety and vitality alike. What does it matter if Russia has no colonies of the British type or if the various Soviet republics enjoy nominal independence? The peoples of many of these republics are backward and they are governed as if they were colonial natives with no possibility of attaining the standards of Americans or western Europeans. Russia has a need to expand economically and to safeguard its boundaries quite aside from the fact that its present leaders are making exaggerated demands because this is a propitious moment for them to obtain what old Russia could never have had in past centuries. This explains the occupation of the Baltic countries, the annexation of half of Poland, Bessarabia and Ruthenia, the control exercised over the Balkans, the claims made upon Iran and Turkey and the whole attack on Britain. What shall we call this except imperialism?

The United States, too, is an empire or imperial power. First it expanded from a group of thirteen colonies into a nation of forty-eight states, then it acquired temporary or permanent colonies or satellites such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Panama and the Philippines. It came at last to have such vital interests in both the Atlantic and the Pacific that it had to take part in two world wars. As a result of the last of these and the conquest of Japan it has taken over naval and air bases throughout the world to which it will soon add, in one form or another, various groups of Pacific islands.

If the British Empire ever is liquidated, then its natural heir is the United States, which would become the focal point of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Already Arabs, Sionists and Hindus are looking to the United States to forward their pleas to Britain for justice and liberty. This is why Russia, either in anticipation of such an event or else with the idea of weakening the chief ally of the United States in a future conflict, is fighting for positions not only in what Churchill thought he had made into a British sphere of influence but in the nations of Western Europe as well. Time will tell whether the writer's hypothesis is correct. But it is clear enough already that the duel for world supremacy will be between Russia and the United States when Britain has been forced into the attitude of a wounded lion in its den. I do not mean to say that a third world war or a war between the United States and Russia is inevitable. Many things may change in the course of the next quarter of a century and American statesmen will acquire far more experience than they have today.

My chief concern is the shrewdness, intrigue and arrogance which the Russians have displayed and are still displaying at the expense of the rest of the world, including the Americans and the British, with either the support or despite the opposition of the United Nations Organization. Stalin and the other Soviet leaders are only too well acquainted with the manoeuverings employed by Hitler when he occupied the demilitarized Rhineland (March 1936), Austria (March 1938), the Sudetenland (September 1938), Danzig (January 1939), Prague and Slovakia (March 1939). If Hitler had stopped there for a few years and brought gradual pressure to bear on Poland and Hungary or if, after the fall of France, he had made peace with the nations of western Europe on acceptable terms, he would have isolated the British Isles and today he would be the uncontested master of Europe.

Russia's future depends on Stalin's present tactics. If Stalin is not in a hurry he will take a circuitous path until one day he comes up against the United States of America. But by this time he will have acquired favorable positions in the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, China, Korea and Japan and he will be able to exercise an influence even upon South America. When this day comes Stalin or his successor will no longer be encircled by capitalist powers. A future president of the United States will be the one to say that North America is encircled by Russia. Then, perhaps, many Americans, rather than undergo an atomic war, will choose to give up their capitalist or plutocrat system and try the "dictatorship of the proletariat"!

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Recent Conversions

DOROTHY THOMPSON

THE INCREASING number of influential Americans who have joined or are taking instructions in preparation for joining the Catholic Church is certainly a phenomenon worthy of observation and comment, despite the unwritten law that in general bars religious discussion from the daily press. My comments must be made as a Protestant from a simple evangelical tradition, who—to put at rest rumors—remains with the faith of her fathers. But I can, I think, understand some aspects of the phenomenon.

The liberal age, which, beginning with the Reformation, rose in the eighteenth century and flourished until the last war, is marching to its decline, assisted in its demise by none more vigorously than the neo-liberals. Individualism, degenerated into "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," has been driving many liberals into a new mechanistic and materialistic worship of the providential state. In the neo-liberal philosophy, conscious or unconscious, little is left of the Jeffersonian concept of the supremacy of society over the state, or of the function of the state to serve the human person. In their vision, state and society are identical and the individual person lives fully only in "organization."

Both fascism and communism are revolts against nineteenth century liberalism, and both are, to some extent, aspects of the same determinist and mechanical state of mind. The fascist is a biological determinist, who would construct an hierarchical structure, out of survival through struggle, at the apex of the pyramid being those peoples endowed with the "heroic" virtues: In Nietzschean terms, war-affirming will, cruelty, and overweening pride. The neo-liberals are economic determinists, who believe that the despairs in man will automatically disappear when his struggle for existence is appeased by economic security and equality, secured through the state.

The great mysteries of birth and death, of passion in love and hate, of hope and despair, of dreams and disappointments are missing in their philosophy. They would construct "a system" that leaves out the human soul. They comprehend the allness of each, but are no longer sensitive to the eachness of all. Fascism and communism both seek to compress man into a "perfect" mechanical system, clipping his attributes to fit the form, and both, since they deal with the material of life itself, which strains at and bursts all patterns, must "reform" man with the utmost ruthlessness.

The undeniable fact of the infinitude of human variety—that nature has never yet produced two absolutely identical human beings, not even in identical twins—is overlooked in all the mechanical systems with the result that in attempting to improve organized man they fail to eliminate, but rather aggravate, the frustrations of the human person, and bring about the decline of culture, their utopias producing science, perhaps—though in pure science this is dubious—and in works of art registering only sterility.

Along with loss of faith in the competitive struggle of each against the other, as a decent or dignified concept of human society, is passing also faith in the Nation as the repository of all loyalties—the great heresy. The interdependence of men and peoples is recognized as true. But increasingly now man appears as a cartoon, as a mere type—"the" German; "the" Frenchman; "the" worker; "the" capitalist; "the" liberal; "the" reactionary—no type having any fidelity to men as they really are. For Germans, even under nazism, may be Christian mystics; Frenchmen may be fascists; workers can be greedy; capitalists may be tender fathers; liberals, too, can be oppressive; and a political reactionary may be, in all his personal relationships, a saint.

Thus man, never finding his prototype in the types, is lonely as seldom he has been, yet longing, as he seldom has, for a community. Metaphorically man is bombed out, roofless, "atomized."

But a community exists, supra-national and supra-economic, a unity with diversity, a House of many Mansions, open to rich and poor, worker and employer, saint and sinner, carrying the authority of survival over two millenia, confessor of the wayward, admonisher of dictators and kings, speaking in all languages, conscious of human frailty and human glory, offerer of refuge for body, soul and senses, demanding and receiving discipline without army, police or concentration camps, welcoming Jew and Gentile, bond or free, in the name of and in service to the Prince of peace, humility and brotherhood: the Son of God, before the spirit and symbol of Whom the Pope himself must kneel.

So it is understandable that from Senator Wagner to Claire Luce, or an ex-communist editor, those who seeing about them change and decay, wars and rumors of wars, competitions for utopia which promise victory only through mortal strife civil or international, growing mechanical systems against which heart and instinct revolt, secular passions and hates elevated into secular religions should turn to the oldest roof of Christendom, as a man, in dire trouble, returns to the roof and arms of his mother.

The secular religions have failed and are failing man, leaving him, individually and socially, despairing while the organizations leave him organized but lonely, and his spirit frustrated and dismayed searches through the encircling gloom for one gleam of kindly light.

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Communications

FOOD FOR EUROPE AND ASIA

112 E. 19 St., New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The Post War World Council is circulating the following petition for a generous relief policy in Europe and Asia. We invite your readers to sign and circulate these petitions and send them in to this office. We are willing to send any number of blank petitions to groups and individuals. The petition follows:

> PETITION to the President of the United States, members of the Senate and House of Representatives. We, the undersigned, urge that immediate steps be taken to make an outright gift of the additional food and other necessities from this country to keep Europe from hunger, disease and cold.
>
> We pledge that: (1) We will gladly accept resumption of rationing, to whatever degree is necessary, to feed the hungry. (2) We will subscribe, up to the limit of our resources, to humanity or food bonds, if Congress finds such financing necessary for an adequate program to save Europe now.
>
> We pledge this not only because we cannot rest while millions of human beings know only black despair, but because we see no hope for building a world of peace and freedom on misery and starvation.

ELSIE ELFENBEIN,
Executive Director.

ADDRESSES FOR PACKAGES

IN RECENT weeks THE COMMONWEAL has received a number of appeals for help from Europe and from friends of European groups in this country. In the hope that some readers will respond, we append the addresses of a number of religious communities desperately in need not only for their own use but for distribution to the poor.

Mme. Maritain, wife of Jacques Maritain, French Ambassador to the Holy See, reports that there are eighty French convents in Italy needing assistance. Any reader desiring to contribute to a fund for their benefit may send cheques to THE COMMONWEAL; packages would be particularly helpful to:

Carmel de St. Joseph,
12 Via Innocenzo X,
Rome, Italy.

Carmel Pie XII,
Torpignattara,
Via Cori 4,
Rome, Italy.

Carmes des 3 Madones,
Via dei 3 Orologi 3,
Rome, Italy.

Sister Hildegarde of Canton, Ohio, gives us a Hungarian address. She writes, "Almost every day there are about thirty deaths by starvation in Budapest. They have no medicines, not enough food, not enough clothes. The infant mortality is extremely high. In the Buda portion of the city there are but four undemolished houses standing. Whatever might be sent to the Sisters would immediately be distributed to the poor and needy among whom the Sisters spend their days. . . ."

Sister Judith Social Mission Society,
125 Krisztina Korut,
Budapest, Hungary.

From Belgium comes a request for clothing and knitting wool. "For wool yarn we should be unspeakably grateful. For a year we have been trying in vain to get wool to knit garments for babies and children who, as someone said, will remember nothing of their childhood but cold and hunger." The address:

Sister Marie Teresita,
Val Notre-Dame,
Antheit, Province de Liège, Belgium.

THE EDITORS.

SOCIALISM AND SOCIALISM

Los Angeles, Cal.

TO the Editors: Allow me to reassure Mr. Will Herberg who, in a footnote to his excellent article (February 22) expresses the fear that I believe government ownership to be the only conceivable form of community ownership.

These are some of the things I believe in:

(1) The necessity of a new economic philosophy organized around the principle of production primarily for use and secondarily for profit.

(2) The necessity of a new organization of our economy so as to actualize this philosophy.

(3) The necessity of government ownership of those productive and service industries which relate too directly to the common good or which involve too great a degree of social ownership safely to be entrusted to private hands.

(4) The wisdom of developing as widely as possible forms of community ownership other than government ownership. The limits of the latter will be largely determined by the extent of development achieved by the former.

(5) The necessity of economic planning participated in by management and labor and "stimulated" and "directed" (see Quadragesimo Anno) by government.

This is one of the things I fear:

That the blind resistance to all forms of community ownership and government ownership will make the development of other forms of community ownership difficult and the extreme extension of government ownership inevitable.

The Reverend GEORGE H. DUNNE, S.J.

The Screen

Everybody's Going Someplace

A FLOCK of pictures are suddenly appearing about people on the move. These films weren't all made recently, but they are being released now—which may be some kind of a reflection of post-war restlessness, or then again, it may be due to the movie-makers' urgent desire to furnish escape when they know very well that

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we can't travel. Even the English have sent us a semi-documentary called *"Journey Together."* Unfortunately I did not get to the preview of this film, and since I have a strict rule about not reviewing movies that I do not see, I can only report from hearsay that this is a nicely made production about the training of the RAF in England and on this continent. It has some beautiful shots of planes in action and many scenes of hardships through which fliers go to learn their stuff. The cast, consisting mainly of RAF-men, includes Edward G. Robinson. The whole thing sounds like a dated, British version of "Winged Victory." I hope, but not for martial reasons, that we continue to journey together.

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope are hitting the highways again; this time they're clowning on *"The Road to Utopia,"* a land of milk and honey that the boys have confused with Alaska, a land of cornflake-snow, rough hombres in fur coats, and dance-hall girls. Most of the film is a flashback to the Gold Rush Days telling a giddy story about a couple of confidence men (B and B) who find a map to a rich mine and then are mistaken in the Klondike as hard-berled killers. The mine rightfully belongs to Sal (Dorothy Lamour); so with this combination already well established on roads leading to Singapore, Zanzibar and Morocco, we are given plenty of songs (sung by all three but mostly by Bing), a surfeit of wisecracks, puns and sexy situations, and the usual competition between the two comedians for Dottie. Also thrown in are: Santa Claus, talking animals (appropriate to the locale) and a narrator (played by the late Robert Benchley) who supposedly is explaining the picture's finer points to dim-wits in the audience but is really making more bright remarks in case our heroes missed any. Actually the gag men overlooked no opportunities for off-color lines and *doubles entendres;* and the pattern, though funny at times, gets tiresome. The paying customers, however, roll in the aisles with laughter.

If there's anything rolling in the aisles at *"Sentimental Journey,"* it's female tears and masculine ennui. Its story (not to be identified with Laurence Sterne's book having the same title) is about a beautiful actress and her director-husband who are madly in love—so madly, in fact, that she has completely spoiled him and cannot bear to share her secret that because of a heart condition she has only a short while to live. So she persuades him to adopt a little girl, who she hopes will take her place, and whom she trains in serving an egotistical male. But the child, a changeling if there ever was one, doesn't work out too well. Evidently raised on shredded gossamer and leprechaun's milk at the orphanage, she thinks the actress is the Lady of Shalott. The husband is definitely chagrined with what they drew. But before this fairy in child's clothing is returned to the institution that thought her up, the actress dies—and then the girl swings into action by playing the couple's favorite record (theme song is "Sentimental Journey"), serving breakfast (complete with rose) in bed, and generally driving the bereaved widower more frantic than he already is. How this works out is exactly what you'd expect on a journey called sentimental, but the picture has nothing to do with

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main floor

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life as any one else lives it. If Director Walter Lang was aiming for tears, he's getting them. What this film's makers deserve is protests from adoption agencies, who must resent the implications that they are so careless in choosing foster parents, and also from theatrical folk who have every right to be annoyed at the actress's reasons for taking a youngster into her home. Maureen O'Hara is very beautiful as the actress, alive and dead (for she returns from time to time to advise the child on things to be done). John Payne plays the pampered husband with a pout on his handsome face and dark glasses to indicate mourning; why he tolerates the little girl at all is hard to understand. Connie Marshall does her best in this rôle that is a mixture of syrup and bad Barrie. Occasionally William Bendix manages to inject a little humor into the macabre situation, but the funniest line is Connie's: explaining why her governess walked out on her, the girl vacantly adds, "She said I drove her crazy."

"The Bandit of Sherwood Forest" isn't exactly another journey or road picture, although it has a lot of riding in all directions without getting anywhere. Its story, mainly about Robert, son of Robin Hood, is a good rousing number that will keep kiddies on edges of chairs and may even remind grown-ups that tyranny and oppression of the common man had to be fought as far back as the thirteenth century. Robert (played by dashing, handsome Cornel Wilde whose muscular arms and prowess as a former fencing champ fit the rôle well) leads his papa's famous gang (who must be getting a little old for this sort of thing) against the Regent (Henry Daniell) who has imprisoned young Henry III. The rescue is full of thrills with well aimed arrows hitting their marks, green-clad men swimming moats and clambering up castle walls, fair ladies acting like women instead of screaming bobby-sockers, and a wonderful duel scene just when the action is most tense. The costumes in technicolor are rather gala, and for the life of you, you'll never be able to figure out how Anita Louise keeps her lovely blond hair-do on her head in all that excitement; but the finale with its "Rise, Sir Robert" is in the good old tradition.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

A New Musical Play
CAROUSEL
Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Book & Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, 2d
Directed by ROUBEN MAMOULIAN
Dances by AGNES de MILLE
with John Raitt, Iva Withers, Jean Darling, Eric Mattson, Christine Johnson, Effie Afton
MAJESTIC W 44th St. Mats. Thurs. & Sat.

The Musical Hit
OKLAHOMA!
Based on Lynn Riggs' "Green Grow the Lilacs"
Music by Richard Rodgers — Book & Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein 2nd — Directed by Rouben Mamoulian—Dances by Agnes de Mille
Harold Keel . Joseph Ruloff . Betty Jane Watson . Ruth Weston
St. James Thea. W 44 Mats. Thurs. & Sat.

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Eddie DOWLING and Louis J. SINGER present
Laurette TAYLOR and Eddie DOWLING
IN
THE GLASS MENAGERIE
A New Play by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
PLAYHOUSE, W. 48th Street. Evgs. 8:40; Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40

"BEAUTIFULLY CAST AND DIRECTED . . . ADULT, ENLIGHTENED, MOVING, THRILLING."
—PHELAN, Commonweal.
DEEP ARE THE ROOTS
by ARNAUD d'USSEAU and JAMES GOW
Staged by ELIA KAZAN
FULTON Thea. 46 St. W. of B'way. Evs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

The Labor Movement

Intriguing Is the Word

AT A RECENT session with newsmen President Truman reported that he had had "a pleasant conference" with John L. Lewis and William L. Hutcheson, boss of the powerful carpenters' union, AFL.

This is an extremely intriguing item of news. It is intriguing from many angles. First, because John L. has not enjoyed a pleasant conference in the White House since about 1938, when he is supposed to have suggested to F.D.R. that they run together in the '40 elections and F.D.R. is supposed to have said, "Which place will you take, John?"

It is even more intriguing because Lewis and Big Bill Hutcheson are now the two most Republican members of the AFL executive council. It is thrice intriguing because they are also the two gentlemen who engaged in a bit of fisticuffs at the AFL convention back in '35.

Finally, it is positively fascinating because it is so difficult to imagine what they talked about and why that talk should be described as "pleasant." Did they, for example, discuss the question of whether or not the Truman Administration will give its blessing to Lewis's demand for an approximately 55 percent raise for his coal miners? Did they consider *quid pro quo's* for the support of Truman by John and Bill in '44? Does Lewis figure that maybe he can do the kind of business with Truman that he failed to do with Roosevelt? Does the word "pleasant" simply mean that no insults were passed?

WITHIN the same week the General Motors strike has come to an end and Walter Reuther's long-expected drive to unseat R. J. Thomas as president of the UAW, CIO, has come to its formal beginning.

And the first question that comes to mind is: "How does the GM settlement affect Reuther's chances?" Reuther, of course, as head of the UAW's GM division and chief spokesman for the union throughout the long and bitter struggle, will naturally get credit, or debit, for the main strategy of the strike.

On the debit side, rightly or wrongly, will be listed the following:

(1) He did not get the 19½-cent raise recommended by the President's fact-finding board.

(2) The strike lasted 113 days, the longest and most costly stoppage in the history of the auto industry.

(3) The strike was called too soon, its effectiveness being largely canceled by the steel walkout and the fact that the excess profits tax repeal did not go into effect

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until January 1. As a result, GM did not make its first serious offer of 18½ cents until a few weeks ago.

On the credit side, however, there will also be some important items. Some of them are:

(1) For the one cent lost on the straight raise the contract more than made up with improved overtime and vacation pay, equal pay for women and elimination of other inequities.

(2) The brilliant job done by Reuther in presenting the UAW's case to the public and the fact-finders undoubtedly had a great deal to do with securing the recommendation of 19½ cents and the subsequent fixing of an 18½-cent pattern throughout the major industries.

(3) The GM strike certainly made it possible to win excellent contracts in Ford, Chrysler and other auto companies without further stoppages.

(4) The confessed determination of General Motors to weaken the UAW's position in their plants was clearly and completely defeated. Not only that, but the strike did not produce the stringent anti-labor legislation that was obviously a secondary objective on the part of GM.

In addition to these points Reuther can also boast that he fought the richest, most powerful and, among major companies, the most anti-labor corporation in the world to a standstill, if not to a straight-out victory. In answer to the charges of jumping the gun he can point out that, with GM's boundless wealth and the tax rebate laws, the only factor that made much difference to them anyway was the business of competitors stealing their markets.

Finally, Reuther can and doubtless will make much of the point that the secret deal for 18½ cents made by the commie-dominated United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, CIO, for GM's 25,000 electrical employees was a strike-breaking tactic that made it virtually impossible for the UAW to win its 19½ cents. Since his principal opposition is not so much Thomas as the CP faction in the UAW, this is certainly not going to hurt his campaign any. In fairness to Thomas, however, it must be admitted that he is no fellow-traveler, even though his record on that score has been far less consistent and courageous than that of his opponent.

Reuther also has more brains and ability than Thomas. The only question is: "Will his fight to win the latter's job split the union so badly that any possible gain may be thereby cancelled?" This and other questions will find their answer during the coming week at Atlantic City. For anyone who wants to know which way the UAW, the CIO and the whole American labor movement are heading the convention proceedings will be absolutely required reading. And for anyone who just likes a good Pier 6 brawl they will probably be the most stimulating reading since the Dempsey-Firpo fight.

And What of GM?

AND WHAT of General Motors, the wealthy giant? What has it gained by holding out so long and so bravely against the recommendations of the President's fact-finding board? Its president, Charles G. Wilson, is sick in Mexico and it has lost over $600,000,000 worth of business. But perhaps it has gained the good opinion of the people who really count, such as the gentlemen who control the policies of the National Association of Manufacturers, the Republican Party, and the Democratic Party, Southern Division.

JOHN C. CORT.

Happiness

"If you want to be a canonized saint you must first become a notoriously happy person." So says Father Gerald Vann in THE DIVINE PITY ($2.50). "The Beatitudes tell us how to be happy," he continues, "as we think over them in turn we shall think also of the Sacraments which bring us the different kinds of energy that we need and of the attitude required of us if the energy is to be used. An attitude expressed on one hand by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost and on the other by the various types of prayer."

His linking of each of the Beatitudes with a Sacrament and a Gift gives us a set of trinities that seem at first startling, then inevitable. In considering them he ranges from such practical advice as that we should cultivate "a right sense of humor" to the loveliest description of the Prayer of Quiet we have ever read. But perhaps the keynote of the book is the sentence "the Paraclete, the Comforter, is not primarily a soothing influence." Neither is Father Vann. It is hard to imagine a reader in whom this book would not stir a desire to get one step nearer to the happiness that God intended for him.

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No rise in The Commonweal's subscription price is contemplated at this time.

The April 12 issue (Spring Book Number)—and subsequent issues—of The Commonweal will therefore cost 15 cents.

Books of the Week

Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man, Mathew B. Brady. Roy Meredith. Scribner's. $7.50.

IN THE YEARS before the Civil War that unforgettable photographer Mathew Brady was dining in the better restaurants of New York, haunting the finer hotels, and brushing his way through the crowds on opening nights, ever on the alert for celebrities willing to suffer the inconvenience of the head-clamp in his studio on Broadway. Poe sat for Brady. So did Cooper and Whitman. So did Clay, Calhoun and Webster. So did Jenny Lind, P. T. Barnum and dozens of other figures whose portraits fill the pages of Roy Meredith's biography.

Easily the most remarkable photographic album ever published on this side of the Atlantic, Mr. Meredith's book provides ample evidence that Brady was an artist to rank with his French contemporary Nadar, whose desperate shot of Baudelaire will be remembered as long as the "Fleurs du Mal."

Since the odds were rarely in an artist's favor in early nineteenth century America, Brady's rise to fame was nothing short of astonishing. A poor Irish boy from upstate New York, he was fifteen when he happened to meet the sensitive painter William Page at Saratoga. Through Page he got a job with A. T. Stewart in New York, and the chance to study the art of daguerreotype making with S. F. B. Morse. Six years later, in 1844, he opened a daguerreotype gallery of his own on the corner of Broadway and Fulton. By the 1850's he was working with the wet plate process discovered by the Englishman Frederick Archer.

With the coming of the Civil War, Brady risked his fortune and his reputation bringing his camera to the front. "I felt I had to go," he said. "A spirit in my feet said *go,* and I went." Superb documents, Brady's photographs of the war are rightfully given most of the space in Mr. Meredith's book. He was, however, far more than a competent recorder. Now and then, as in the shot of the ruins of the Crenshaw and Gallego mills, he succeeded in recreating the peculiar second in which an incident has not yet become past time. And in his view of the Petersburg Court House he was as close to the poetry of architecture as Clarence John Laughlin in our day.

Though Mr. Meredith might be criticized for omitting examples of Brady's purely romantic work—the famous "Reflection" in the collection of the Signal Corps is missing—the noble portraits of Lee and Lincoln more than make up for any such shortcoming.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

God and the Atom. R. A. Knox. Sheed. $2.00.

ANYONE who has read, aloud, or to themselves, Monsignor Knox's splendid new translation of the New Testament, will have realized that he is a great master of English prose. Few living authors are such craftsmen, turning a sentence as though mind were lathe, paring off the superfluous, adding the final, slightly strange fillip that gives a tang, like herb-mustard to meat. But his "God and the Atom" starts off as higher journalism, goes on to Belles-Lettres, and only towards the home stretch breaks into a good gallop as polemics, which unquestionably it should have been all along.

For whilst he is reducing science to popular terms

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Monsignor Knox, in spite of the kind offices of Sir Edmund Whittaker (suitably acknowledged in an author's note), is no better than umpteen other such popularizers. He is not, as the tidy, culinary French say, *dans son assiette,* on his plate. Of the relations between the atom and man, many know more and write better; into the relations between God and the Atom, only a Saint Thomas could adequately go. But of the triangle, God, man, atom, Monsignor Knox writes exceedingly well.

For him, the bombing of Hiroshima was a pity, not a sin; a lesser good, not a minor evil. We lost a great opportunity to refrain; for religion "twist it as you will, means restraint . . . for a scruple you are asked to let the unrecoverable opportunity slip through your hands, let the other man get in first. To have the world at your feet, and say 'no.' It would have been, *pace* Dickens, a far far better thing not to have bombed it only to prove we had a *bushido* of our own."

Monsignor Knox watches man's doubts grow, as one by one the securities of the ancient world are withdrawn. At the end of the Middle Ages the emphasis changes from the certainty of the Creator to the thing patently created; then to the idealism which assumes that the human mind is the knower, and the certainty of the external world insignificant. God became external, a First Cause that had no further connection with creation; then the "good, old-fashioned materialist world," "the set of lumps," disappeared too. Now we have three "separate interpretations of the external world and we juggle with all three simultaneously: the solid world of commonsense, the world of the metaphysician, all docketed and labeled like an album with pressed flowers in it, and the world of the physicist rotating, coruscating, ebullient with paradox."

And theology, that had been a prism to catch the sun, became a prison from which to escape. By an accident—Monsignor Knox calls it of history, but it seems in reality more one of semantics—what had been the language of the ale-room, the jargon of the laboratories, stiffened into a hieratic harness, as outmoded as decade-old slang. Like the Sisters of Charity's habits, that began as the average female attire, and now are costume, so such originally simple concepts as the ontological proof of God became archaic mental strait-jackets. And it was thus armored that we met the atom.

In his final essay, on "Sublimation," Monsignor Knox tells us that the answer is, as it always is no doubt, that we are skimping: giving, and getting, short measure. What we need is more: more faith, more hope, more charity, more terror: it is not that we are too afraid: we are not half afraid enough. We had forgotten that *"terribile nomen Ejus."* For atomic energy is a gift, too, but a terrible one: "all His gifts are terrible. Gold and the beauty of women have made and unmade empires; what blessings wine has called down upon itself, what maledictions! Once God has given us free-will, He has given us a wand that turns everything to meat or poison for us."

So Monsignor Knox is not unduly disturbed. If the Atomic Bomb blows us all up tomorrow, as Christians we are not even professionally interested: the end of the world has seemed often nearer than that. And "the Atomic Age will have, no less than ourselves, windows that open on eternity. The true lesson of the five proofs, as of all other proofs devised to establish the fact of God's exist-

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—*Chicago Sun*

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ence, is that we see His face looking down at us from the end of every avenue of our thought, there is no escaping from It."

And perhaps, he concludes, this whole age of atoms and anguish, of dilemmas and desolations, is a kind of cosmic, or at all events, of planetary experience, comparable, on another level, with the dryness of certain mystical states: a dark night not of the soul, but of the earth. If so, that is comfort indeed, for, as Thomas Treherne put it, "the most tempestuous weather is ever the best seed-time."

ANNE FREMANTLE.

David the King. Gladys Schmitt. Dial. $3.00.

EACH AGE tends to revise the legacy of the past, and to adapt it to the needs or tastes of the present. As the Romans reshaped Greek legends, as Shakespeare and Racine reworked Roman and Italian themes, so some novelists of our time have turned to the stories of the Old Testament, which have lost their familiarity in an age not given to the reading of Scripture. Thomas Mann has lately rewritten the story of Joseph; now Gladys Schmitt retells that of David, the sweet singer and second king of Israel, for the multitude who would not turn to the Bible even in the otherwise bookless boredom of a hotel room, but nonetheless can be induced by the wiles of advertising to read "the story of God's most magnificent sinner."

However much one may regret the methods necessary to arouse our generation's interest in the Judeo-Christian tradition, nothing but admiration can be felt for the skill with which Gladys Schmitt has recreated the old story, using in masterly fashion the resources of modern fiction. She has preserved the power and strength of her source, and invested them with a rare eloquence found rather in the Psalms than in the Books of Kings. She has taken some liberties with incidents—David does not kill Goliath, but gets the credit for the deed because of the song he made about it—and she has filled out the bare simplicity of the original to a length which would be somewhat tedious were it not for the sustained high quality of the writing. She has heightened the lights and shadows of David's story, but her tale is reverently told for all its rude realism; there is no sentimental or melodramatic vulgarization. She makes of David a living man, with all the faults and weaknesses of a man, but yet great enough, despite his rise from shepherd boy with a gift for song to the lordship of Israel, to see his sins as Jahver saw them, and in the height of his glory to abase himself before his God. This account of ancient man's pilgrimage through life and his search for his soul is an extremely distinguished and moving novel, which stands far above the recent ruck of cheap and false recreations of the past designed for those who seek entertainment rather than wisdom from the record of man's life on earth.

MASON WADE.

The Story of Woodrow Wilson. Ruth Cranston. S. & S. $3.50.

THE STORY of Woodrow Wilson by Ruth Cranston is an interesting and in some respects an important addition to the list of biographies which have been published about him. The author approaches the subject as an admirer of President Wilson and only once, in her account of the withdrawal by Colonel George Harvey of his support of Mr. Wilson's presidential candidacy in December, 1911, can she be criticized

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as having unfairly defended Mr. Wilson's conduct.

The chapters dealing with the President's rôle at the Versailles Peace Conference together with his efforts to secure the ratification of the treaty by the Senate are admirable in their recounting of the events of that period. They accomplish a most valuable result historically, in conclusively placing the responsibility for the rejection of the Covenant of the League of Nations on Senator Lodge and his fellow conspirators both in, as well as out of, the Senate.

The early life of Mr. Wilson at home as a student and teacher is described at great length and is highly informative. At an early age he felt he was fitted to play an important part in political life—which ambition, while long delayed, was finally realized in his election to the presidency.

The portions of the book dealing with his administration as Governor of New Jersey and President are too popularized in their treatment of the issues both domestic and foreign which confronted him and do not compare in quality with Professor Bell's volume on President Wilson. Mrs. Cranston makes a penetrating observation concerning the political activities of Colonel House. She thinks that the relationship which existed between him and President Wilson was weakened by the fact that they were not of the same mind.

A reading of this book should be instructive to the opponents of Mr. Wilson, and gratifying to his supporters, by its portrayal of him as one of our great presidents whose place in American history is at last beginning to be appreciated.

SCHUYLER N. WARREN.

The Growth of Constitutional Power in the United States. Carl Brent Swisher. Chicago. $2.50.

IN 1833 de Tocqueville wrote that the federal government of the United States was concerned only with foreign affairs, and that the state governments alone directed the domestic society of the country. About a century later a huge domestic legislative program known as the New Deal was battering at the doors of the Supreme Court. For a while the Court resisted the inevitable, declaring eleven acts of Congress unconstitutional in the years 1935 and 1936. In 1937 the Court gave way and federal power rose to undreamed heights.

Does this mean, as some assert, the end of federalism and of our constitutional system of limited, delegated powers? Are the states hopelessly subordinated to Washington? Professor Swisher's book, derived from a series of lectures he gave at the University of Chicago, reassures us. There is no danger that the constitutional balance between the states and the federal government will be destroyed. Indeed the Constitution does not provide for any such balance. And even if it did, state institutions have not more than begun to disintegrate. The states still have enough reserved power to promote that local welfare which makes up the higher welfare of the people of the United States.

Moreover, Professor Swisher says, the checks and balances and the tripartite separation of powers will protect us from excessive federal statism. Some of the checks may be too severe, such as the requirement of a two-thirds Senate vote on treaties, but otherwise he sees little to change in our constitutional processes. If the checks

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limit our capacity for positive action at a time when our ability to survive may depend on affirmative solutions, that is one of the penalties we pay for democracy.

Professor Swisher's book justifies the claim made for it that it is a stimulating text for courses on the Constitution and good reading for the people in whose hands rests the future of federalism. The courses and the lay reading should, though, be supplemented by more critical writings which are less ready to accept the present state of our governmental machinery as adequate for the hugely increased demands, especially in foreign affairs, which are now bearing on it. THOMAS K. FINLETTER.

According to the Pattern. Katherine Burton. Longmans. $2.50.

OSTENSIBLY this is the story of two women, Dr. Agnes McLaren and Mother Anna Dengel. Actually it is the biography, not of persons, but of an idea. It was only as I grasped this fact that I began to enjoy the book. At first I found "According to the Pattern" disappointing. The figures moved through the pages stiffly—even such a colorful figure as Dr. McLaren. It was only as the idea itself began to take shape that human personalities appeared in their true importance, or unimportance. Instead of circumstances moulding the individual, here the individuals were themselves the circumstances; it was the idea which took on color and vibrant life; which grew and flexed until the very canon law of the Church could no longer check its headlong strength.

The idea was that of a Catholic sisterhood, whose members would be doctors and nurses, dedicated to the care of women and children in missionary lands. It was an idea conceived and gestated in the mind of a sixty-eight year old Scotswoman, Agnes McLaren, in 1904. It was delivered twenty-one years later on American soil by Austrian Anna Dengel. It achieved maturity in 1935, when Rome relaxed the centuries-old prohibitions of canon law, and ruled that women could be doctors and nurses and at the same time nuns.

It is a story that makes exciting reading, with Church legislation in the unaccustomed rôle of villain of the piece. To those of us who fancy ourselves as social-minded, this book offers a valuable object lesson. Age-old traditions of the Church can be a formidable obstacle. But in matters of discipline the Church can be moved, if patience be persistent and persistence patient.

Katherine Burton already is well known for her biographies of Catholic contemporaries. In "According to the Pattern" she has written well. Quietly, with emphasis by understatement, she has let her subject speak for itself. This is a book that anyone will enjoy, and profit by enjoying. LEO J. TRESE.

CONTRIBUTORS

J. L. BENVENISTI writes his commentary on British problems from London; he is a regular contributor.
Don Luigi STURZO, founder of the Italian *Partito Popolare* and one of the most distinguished exponents and active leaders of Christian democracy, is at present still in this country.
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Wayne ANDREWS has written American historical portraits and is a critic of architecture.
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